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why, for example, are the arts of life so humble and mechanical, while the arts of death are so imposing and high. But we have not room to discuss them. We hope that these inventions will continue to multiply, and are content to esteem as a benefactor to mankind, every one who adds to their number. It is true, they are things that pass away; this is because one improvement follows and supplants another; it is like the teeth of childhood; the new push out the old, and are ready to take their places when they fall.

ART. IV.—*Pennsylvanian Biography.*

Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Part II. Philadelphia. 1830.

We have always attached great importance to the systematic study, as a part of education, of the personal narrative of the Revolution. No nation the world has ever known can make a more substantial boast, as respects the character of its founders, than we can, and classical antiquity has no more romantic picture than our free infancy presents. Pride in such an ancestry is an elevated and honorable sentiment, which we would fondly cherish, as calculated to fill a void which may be less beneficially supplied. ‘Ad illa, pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quæ vita, qui mores fuerint; per quos viros, quibus artibus domi militiæque partum et auctum imperium sit.’ It is surely not extravagant to say, that the man, who thoroughly imbibes the spirit of romantic devotion which actuated our revolutionary progenitors, will scorn the humbler associations of ephemeral politics, and, in aiming at an imitation of the virtues of our heroic age, will rise to a level suited to such an emulation. Let any one study with attention the biographies of such men as James Otis and Josiah Quincy, and watch the developement of patriotic ardor, which, when once it burst into a flame, defied control, the fearlessness that shrunk from no danger and despised all compromise, the willing immolation of every selfish feeling, and the romantic consecration of every faculty to what seemed to be the engrossing purpose of their being, and he will hardly view with much respect the feats and honors of a modern politician. We have referred to these two instances, on account of their marked peculiarity, and be-

cause they are among the few, which the care of posterity has illustrated. The principles on which they acted were those which guided every patriot of the times. There seemed to be a holy atmosphere that enveloped the soil of freedom, and exerted its genial influence on all who breathed it. It is painful to confess, that less pure breezes have occasionally tainted this consecrated element, and to observe the difference which, in point of moral and poetic beauty, may be discerned in the career of the same individual. We shall not easily forget the unpleasant effect produced by the contrast of the revolutionary with the post-revolutionary memoirs of Mr. Jefferson, his autobiography with his 'Ana.' In the first, we trace the operation of pure and patriotic sympathies, and affections too active and powerful to permit the intrusion of personal antipathy, or suspicion of any feeling unworthy of the great cause he was so anxiously promoting; in the last, it is impossible to be blind to the influence of party association on a vigorous and honorable mind, in fostering unkind resentments, and perpetuating hostility of the severest description. And yet, of all the eulogies which the natural enthusiasm of the day has bestowed on that great man, how few, in comparison, are founded on the enduring basis of his revolutionary services.

It is matter of sincere regret, that as a study and a part of at least accomplished education, the history and biography of the Revolution have been so grossly neglected. We do not hazard much in saying, that there is no given portion of modern history, with the details of which the great body of our fellow-citizens are less familiar, than that which records the actions of our immediate ancestry; and that there are many, very many Americans, young and old, who, while they would smile in scorn, if asked what 'ship-money' or '*lettres de cachet*' were, would pause in ignorance if catechised as to the objects of 'the Quebec bill' or the 'writs of assistance.' Hampden, and Russell, and Sidney, are names familiar to many, to whom the personal services of our own patriots are unknown. To produce a different result is the legitimate object of American literature, and it is with sincere pleasure that we hail any attempt, however humble, to rescue from the dark oblivion in which they have too long reposed, the records of our early fame. We would make it popular by all the fascinations of eloquence and all the mechanical embellishments of art. We would have a 'Family Library,' truly

national, and instead of tainting the minds of our children by access to the records of justified or palliated crime, in the biographies of profligate heroes and licentious monarchs,* we would chasten them by the habitual exhibition of virtues of domestic growth, and actions of appropriate interest. Independently of the ulterior consequence of contributing to the capital stock on which the future historian of our country will have to operate, the revolutionary biographer may be stimulated by the reasonable hope of giving a new and salutary direction to the public taste; and, putting out of view the practical and substantial benefits to which we have incidentally referred, he will find, that the personal narratives of our early history are replete with incident worthy of illustration from authors as able and accomplished as any that our country has yet produced.

Our attention has been recently directed anew to the materials for supplying the void to which we have alluded, by the publication of the volume whose title we have prefixed to this article. Though it is in itself meagre in point of novel information, the source from which it emanates entitles it to some notice at our hands, particularly as it professes, in part, to illustrate portions of our early history, which have hitherto been in great measure neglected. We refer, especially, to the revolutionary annals of what, at the commencement of the contest, was the metropolis of our country. It is matter of painful astonishment, that, with the abundance of materials and the acknowledged existence of the requisite ability, no biography of a Pennsylvanian patriot has yet appeared. The descendants of the great men whom that portion of the Union produced, owe a vast debt to their country, which we hope will before long be cancelled; and if such a result shall be at all promoted by the cursory remarks we have made, every object we have in view will be fully attained. There is a peculiar interest connected with this subject, which deserves a more specific reference, than our limits will now permit us to make. All that we hope to do, is to point to the soil beneath which the treasures are hidden. Boston and Philadelphia, at the commencement of the contest, were the two points at which the flame of active patriotism seemed to burn brightest. The density of city population

* No. VI. Harper's Family Library, Southey's Life of Nelson; No. XV. Croly's Life and Times of George IV.

quicken the contagion of revolutionary doctrines, and the fact, that the oppressive measures of the Government immediately affected commercial interests, rendered the large ports the scenes of the first grievance and complaint. Our city was the theatre of the first overt act of rebellion and actual insurrection. In fact, the materials for combustion had been long collecting there. At various times anterior to the general conflagration, the fire of opposition had burst forth; and though, as in the case of the combat with Captain Preston, it had been suppressed, every thing seemed on that account the more ready for rekindling, whenever accident should apply the torch. In our sister city, there was less harmony of sentiment and action, in consequence not only of a different constitution of society, but of an accidental difference in the course of events. Manifest as was the dissimilarity in the former particular, occasioned by the influence of the proprietary party, who had a direct and substantial interest in the preservation of tranquillity, and by the pacific tendency of the principles of the Society of Friends, it would beyond doubt have been less apparent, had the same impulse to violence been given. We do not pretend to say, that the staid and reflecting ancestors of our Philadelphia brethren would have gone to the work of rebellion, as did our progenitors, in masquerade; but there is every reason to believe, that, had the tea ships arrived first at that city, and the same arrogant folly and insolence been exhibited there as here, by the Government party, the waters of the Delaware would have been impregnated with the hated herb. As it was, there was more than one development of excessive and appropriate exasperation. On receiving the intelligence of Dr. Franklin's examination before the Privy Council, a manifestation of feeling occurred, illustrative of the actual state of the public mind. A cart was prepared, with the usual decorations for such exhibitions, in which were placed the figures of the Solicitor-General, Mr. Wedderburne, and Governor Hutchinson, and in open defiance of the delegated authority of royalty, was drawn through the principal streets of the city, and with its contents publicly burned in the presence of an immense concourse at the Coffee-house. When the arrival of the tea ships was announced, a degree of excitement prevailed, which, had it not been tranquillized, would have led to open violence and resistance. Meeting after meeting had been held in anticipation of the event, and the most strenuous exertions made

by all parties, to give to the inevitable explosion a direction suited to their various views. A spontaneous, though informal resolution was taken, that the ordinary services of pilotage should be withheld ; and though the leading whigs earnestly opposed such a course, as calculated to discredit the cause of opposition, the decision was formed and the vessel was unable to procure a pilot. Her actual arrival below the city was a signal for a more open demonstration of popular sentiment. A town meeting composed of several thousand citizens was convened, and resolutions suited to the meridian of Faneuil Hall were adopted, threatening summary retribution in case the wishes of the people should be slighted. This indication of certain consequences, the captain and consignees thought it expedient to regard ; and in less than six hours from the time of dropping anchor in the Delaware, the ministerial adventure was on its return to Great Britain.

We have referred to the conduct of the Philadelphians in relation to the Revenue Bill rather than to that produced by the Stamp Act, because it better illustrates the actual state of feeling anterior to the catastrophe, and because it served immediately to bring forward the patriots, who, in the eventful struggles of succeeding years, gained enduring fame. Before this time the ardent and zealous, those who were truly the men of revolution, cautiously, and, from a strong sense of expediency, kept themselves in the shade until accident should occasion the final rupture. They felt that active participation on their part might produce a reaction, and, by rendering the timid still more cautious, might obstruct the current of popular feeling, which they knew would flow on without their interference. The necessity and propriety of this reserve resulted from a peculiarity in the political condition of the Province, arising from local causes, and from the great ascendancy of the Quaker interest, whose acquiescence it was necessary for the popular party to secure. For many years, the councils of the Colony had been distracted by conflicts of a violent kind. There had been an uninterrupted series of disputes between the proprietaries and the popular branch of the Colonial Legislature, of which the natural result was increased obstinacy on both sides, without the least shadow of concession by either. The Quakers, uniformly the predominant sect, averse in all instances from extremities of any kind, had acquired great influence, by their wealth, their numbers, and their respectability,

and, by the inculcation of their pacific tenets, obviated the effect of contests so bitter and unremitting. Had these principles been less prevalent, different consequences would have ensued, and the Assembly of this Colony, like those of Virginia and Massachusetts, would have been the theatre of animated and fearless discussions, in which the least loyal doctrines would have been boldly uttered and resolutely sustained. As it was, however, in the first instance anti-ministerial, and *à fortiori* revolutionary opinions met with comparatively little favor. Every effort was made to prevent a rupture, which, if it once occurred, every one knew must be irreparable. It was necessary to try every conceivable project of conciliation and compromise, before this pacific set of men could be induced to enter the ranks of opposition. During the disputes with the Governors, the Friends had consistently supported what were called the popular doctrines, and had uniformly opposed the proprietary interests. Transition from one kind of opposition to another would seem to be natural. Yet, with all their inveterate and well-ascertained antipathy to the proprietors, and their avowed anxiety to alter the form of Colonial Government, they shrank from active resistance to the parent country, and scrupulously avoided the contagion of principles, by any construction or in any degree revolutionary. It was in this way, that the patriotic career of Pennsylvania was at first retarded, and it was on this account, that her active and zealous whigs appeared comparatively at a later period before the world. They were, for the reasons we have briefly stated, hampered by the necessity of a gradual persuasion of the Friends, and by the reasonable fear, that extreme measures of any kind, if taken too soon, would occasion a fatal secession. They had foresight enough to know that the halcyon season of equivocal tranquillity which then existed, and the continuance of which was the burthen of many a fervent prayer, could not in the nature of things endure long, and they attached too much importance to harmony of sentiment and action on the occurrence of the catastrophe, to endanger it by indiscreet and premature manifestations of their zeal. When Mr. Quincy, at a still later period, with characteristic ardor, complained in a letter to Mr. Dickinson, 'of the refinements, delays, and experiments of the Philadelphians,' he forgot the difference of the elements which he and his correspondent breathed; that while in the one place the atmosphere was

electrical with indignant zeal, and but one voice was heard and one sentiment uttered; in the other there was a temporary qualification of hostile feeling, which time only could remove. He knew nothing of the anxieties and deferred hopes of those who sympathized with every grievance, and bitterly lamented their inability to place themselves at once in the line of opposition.

The crisis was not long postponed. The unceremonious refusal to permit the importation of the tea shipments, was an act of confessed illegality and aggravated insult, which no one was so sanguine as to suppose would be allowed to pass unnoticed by the ministry, and every one waited in silent expectation for the developement of vengeance. The Bostonians had thrown the tea into the river. The Philadelphians had not, because they had found in those interested more compliant adversaries, but had compelled the captain to carry back his cargo whence it came. The difference of offence was slight, for though there was but one criminal overt act, so perfect was the sympathy throughout the Colonies, that there were no degrees of excitement on this point, and those who had most actively offended were not more reasonably apprehensive than those who had justified the act of violence, and whose innocence of outrage could only be attributed to the want of opportunity. For several months after the tea ship sailed, there was an ominous tranquillity, broken by no expression of public feeling. It was the boding quiet that precedes the storm. There is a passage in the life of the puritan, Colonel Hutchinson, couched in the quaint language of the day, which is accurately descriptive of the period to which we allude; 'The land,' says the fair historian, 'was then at peace,—it being towards the end of the reign of King James I.,—if that quietness may be called a peace, which was rather like the calme and smooth surface of the sea, whose dark womb is already impregnated of a horrid tempest.' Legislative omnipotence, the vital principle of the Stamp Act, the declaratory law and the Revenue Bill had been defied, and no one doubted, that severe retribution would follow the commission of what, on the royal and ministerial scale of criminality, was the height of political enormity. The bolt of vengeance did not long lie unemployed in the metropolitan armory. The fury of insulted authority was realized and concentrated in the Boston Port Bill, the news of which, and of the conduct of its

immediate victims, reached Philadelphia in the early part of May, 1774, and marked the era of the full developement of the patriotic zeal, which previously had been unnaturally suppressed.

The object we have had in view, is not to dwell upon the details of local history further than as they illustrate the valuable biographical materials which are yet to be produced. The prominent incidents of the times have been recorded by the general historian; but the hidden impulses to action, the secret motives, the remote and final causes of these results, can be ascertained only from the private and confidential correspondence of the patriots of the times. In the interval between the intelligence of the Port Bill, and the meeting of the Congress of 1774, each hour seemed destined to develop some new mode of oppression abroad, and some variety of excitement and resentment at home. On the part of the patriots, activity had usurped the place of deliberation, and compromise and conciliation were forgotten in the sense of the necessity of some kind of opposition to claims and impositions, felt and acknowledged by all but a small fragment of the community to be intolerable. By opposition we do not mean actual hostility and rebellion, having independence for its aim, for such a result we have no reason to believe was then generally anticipated, but resolute refusal to acknowledge the right of imposition and coercion, and a readiness to yield unreserved sympathy to those who were the immediate victims of ministerial tyranny. Such an opposition was fully organized in Philadelphia before the assembling of the General Congress. When that body met, the necessity of local exertion seemed to be in a measure removed, and the individuals who had been the heroes of the provincial stage, and to whose merits and efforts we wish especially to refer, were transferred to a higher sphere of action on the legislative theatre of the nation. The proceedings of the Congress of 1774 are matters of history, to which we refer no further than incidentally to notice them. It was the venerable parent of American legislation, the untainted source of our national honor and renown. It was an assembly placed by the character of its objects above the suspicion of impure or selfish motive, representing the majesty of an injured people, and acting under the guidance of no wish, but to do full justice to the end of its institution. It embodied all the romance and purity of purpose that adorn revolutions, and was destitute of

all the fanaticism and absurd and vulgar violence, that often disfigure them. On the minds of the citizens of the capital where it was convened, it had a most happy influence. All parties seemed to be satisfied. The personal character of the members, who were known to be, without exception, men of commanding intelligence and unquestioned respectability, was such as to inspire unlimited confidence. The mystery with which their deliberations were conducted, and the unanimity with which it was believed that all their resolutions had passed, although, as in the case of Mr. Galloway's proposition, which was adopted by a majority of but one Colony, there had been little harmony as to questions of policy; the manifest cordiality which marked their personal intercourse; the firm, but temperate tone of their published addresses, the most decided of which was the answer to the Suffolk County resolutions;—all had a tendency to compose the previous political agitation, and to assuage the bitterness of feeling, which had before been manifested. It is remarkable, considering the result, that the various views of all parties in the Province should have been so happily met. The zealous patriots, who, in case of extremity, looked directly to the last resort, knew that whilst temporizing measures were sanctioned by the Congress, in which body there were many as ardent as themselves, they could have no reason to complain. Those, again, who felt an equal interest in the support of Colonial rights, but who deemed temperance of language and action the safest and best policy, were satisfied with the moderation and caution of the Congress, and with the conviction, that those whom they regarded as their proper representatives, had great influence in that assembly. Even the timid and disaffected had less reason for discontent than they had anticipated. They, too, had their representatives, who, as in the instance of Mr. Galloway, were distinguished for talent and influence; and they found consolation amid their fears and forebodings in a decided preference of the counsels of the moderate party, with whom they had some sympathy, to those of the ultra patriots, with whom they had none. Such was the state of feeling in Pennsylvania on perceiving the success of this first experiment of independent legislation; and the satisfaction which all expressed was realized in the apparent cordiality with which the non-importation and non-consumption agreements were adopted and enforced. When these measures of peace-

ful, but resolute opposition were recommended by Congress, it was not done by ordinary legislative resolutions, but by a solemn compact signed by the members, by which they bound themselves and their constituents 'by the sacred ties of virtue, honor, and love of country,' to the performance of the requisitions it prescribed. Public opinion fully sanctioned this obligation, and the loyal as well as the liberal portion of the citizens of Philadelphia, the tories as well as the whigs, immediately acceded to it.

In the Congress of 1774, there was one man, of whom his native State has especial reason to be proud, and whose memory we hope she religiously cherishes. We refer to the first of a triumvirate of patriots, to whom only we shall be able to allude at this time, John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, the author of the Farmer's Letters. From the period of the first Colonial discontents, in consequence of the restrictions on the West India trade in 1763, and the Stamp Act in 1765, to the final catastrophe, Mr. Dickinson was the determined and efficient advocate of popular principles; and long before he was known beyond the limits of his native Colony, he had acquired a high and honorable distinction there by the part he had acted in the animated contests of local politics. The position he held was a singular and a fortunate one. He was friendly to the continuance of the proprietary form of government, which, in the peculiar circumstances of the times, he believed to be the one most conducive to the welfare of the community, and was at the same time intimately connected with the Friends, who, as we have said, were desirous of a change in the Colonial charter. From this peculiar relation, independently of the consideration of his commanding talents and unblemished private worth, his sentiments and conduct derived great influence. His constitutional moderation and deliberative disposition were remarkable. This distinction was not destined to be confined to the sphere of local action. The publication of the Farmer's Letters actually formed an era in the history of the times. They were republished and read throughout all the Colonies. No one of the numerous publications of the day acquired greater celebrity, and many, which, from peculiar circumstances, enjoyed for a time equal repute, were of far inferior merit. They are the finished product of the scholar's labors, and contain the genuine expression of the patriot's aspirations. In them, the student of revolutionary

history will find a strain of simple and fervent eloquence suited to the theme, and an aptness of illustration and force of reasoning the most admirable and conclusive. If beauty of style and interest of subject form the essence of the distinction, they are part of the classical literature of our country. Their effect at the time of their publication was inconceivable, and the *Pennsylvania Farmer* was at once ranked among the most eloquent advocates of resistance that had then appeared. Yet who reads the *Farmer's Letters* now, and how many are there, we ask the question mournfully, of the multitudes of well-educated young men in our country, who have drunk largely of the poisoned stream of foreign political literature, and are familiar with all the gilded heresies which have been coined in the mint of British toryism, who are ignorant alike of the object and the author of these once celebrated productions? We will venture to express the hope, that some of those who peruse these pages will credit the cordial praise we have bestowed, and be induced to ascertain for themselves that our encomium is not undeserved. The tribute of admiration paid by Dugald Stewart to the early American state papers, is as justly due to the occasional publications of the day, of which the *Farmer's Letters* were beyond comparison the most distinguished. Mr. Dickinson was *par excellence* the writer for the first Congresses, and it is to his pen that we are indebted for a great portion of the addresses, which embodied in language so appropriate the resentment of an injured people. He wrote 'what the thunders uttered.' The addresses of the various conventions of his native Colony, the instructions from the people of Pennsylvania to their delegates in the General Assembly, the letters of Congress to the Canadians, and to the inhabitants of Bermuda on the Quebec Bill, the address to the King, and many other papers, which our space will not permit us even to mention, were written by him. It is known that Mr. Dickinson was opposed to Independence at the time when it was decided on by Congress, and that he did not sign the Declaration. It is not our duty, in this place or at this time, to vindicate his fame. In his doubts, let it be remembered, he was not singular. Caution and deliberation, perhaps too uniformly operating, were his characteristics, and it is apparent from the detached portions of his private correspondence, which have met the public eye, that, as the crisis approached when the destinies of his country were to be deter-

mined, his constitutional temperament did not soon enough yield to the exigencies of the times, and that he hesitated a moment too long, and allowed others to adopt the decisive measure to which time would have reconciled him. His unpublished correspondence on this subject must be peculiarly interesting.

In strong contrast, in this particular, with the individual to whom we have just referred, was his early associate, Joseph Reed, subsequently President of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. Of the character and temperament of the latter, we cannot convey a better idea than by describing him as the confidential and intimate friend of Warren and Quincy, and the one of their numerous correspondents to whom they seemed to write with the least reserve. Theirs was the intercourse of minds perfectly congenial, and confident, not merely in each other's faith, but in each other's zeal and enthusiasm. 'I congratulate you,' says Mr. Reed in a letter to Mr. Quincy, which has been published, 'on the rising glory of America; *our* operations have been almost too slow for the accumulated sufferings of Boston; but should our bloodless war fail of its effect, we are ready to make the last appeal rather than resign our liberties into the hand of any ministerial tyrant.' And it was in reply to this assurance, that his correspondent, filled with romantic enthusiasm at the prospect of events in which his hard fate prevented him from participating, made his prophetic declaration; 'I look to my countrymen with the feelings of one, who verily believes they must yet seal their faith and constancy with their blood. This is a distressing witness indeed. But hath not this ever been the lot of humanity? Have not blood and treasure in all ages been the price of civil liberty? Can Americans hope for a reversal of the laws of our nature, and that the best of blessings will be obtained and secured without the sharpest trials? Adieu, my friend. My heart is with you, and whenever my countrymen command, my person shall be also.' Mr. Reed belonged entirely to the era of the Revolution, the commencement and termination of his public life being coincident with the beginning and the end of the contest. His career was a short but a brilliant and eventful one, crowded with incidents worthy of ample illustration at the hands of those on whom the care of his memory has devolved. His private correspondence in 1774 with Lord Dartmouth, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, commenced

by the young American at the suggestion of some foreigners friendly to the Colonial cause, encouraged by the minister, and abruptly terminated by Mr. Reed on the occurrence of hostilities at Lexington, must possess great historical value. The other features of his biography are marked with equal interest. In the early stages of revolt and opposition at Philadelphia, he was the orator of the patriotic party, and the individual on whose eloquence the friends of liberty principally relied. The commanding position which he then assumed was not subsequently abandoned. As the confidential Secretary of Washington during the opening campaign in New England; as the bosom friend and destined biographer of Greene;* as the Executive head of his native State during the gloomiest period of the Revolution, when her counsels were distracted by faction, and her great energies paralyzed by the discord of her rulers and the temporary secession of her troops; as the valued military counsellor of the Commander-in-Chief in the anxious hours which preceded the attack on Trenton; as the successful prosecutor of Arnold for rapacity and peculation, whose treason he was the first to suspect and denounce; as the associate of Morris and Laurens in repelling the insidious attempts of the agents of ministerial corruption, the detailed history of which has never yet appeared; and as the author of the reply so often recorded, and never to be forgotten, ‘that he was not worth buying, but that such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it;’ in all his relations to the history of the times, his character and actions are clothed with peculiar interest. A shade of gloom attended the close of his honorable career. The termination of the war found him with a constitution impaired by exposure to unrelenting anxiety and fatigue, and at the early age of forty-two, when the powers of his brilliant mind had reached their full developement, and at a period of public affairs, when he might have won new honors in a new career, he sank a broken-hearted man into a premature grave, dug for him by the restless hands of political malignity. The record of his virtues and his actions has, we believe, never been attempted, and in the allusion we have made to them, we have been guided principally by the imperfect information which general history affords. We are aware

*President Reed actually commenced a biography of General Greene, as well as a history of the Revolution, in neither of which works did he live to make much progress.

how inadequate it is. It remains for others to do the subject more ample justice.

There is yet one name worthy of a far more substantial memorial than our transient pages can afford, with a reference to which we must conclude this article. We allude to that of Robert Morris, of whom it has been justly said, that our country, with a single exception, owes more to him than to any other individual of the times, and of whose public services, imperfectly as they have been understood and appreciated, we are reluctant incidentally to speak. The civil history of the Revolution is the history of Mr. Morris's life. The development of his financial system,—and it is the highest praise to apply such a term to a structure raised on the uncertain soil, and adapted to the varying exigencies of revolution,—and the faithful narrative of his unwearied and successful efforts to supply aliment to the feeble Government which depended on him for sustenance, will be far more interesting than any historical or biographical memoir that has yet been written. It is a subject worthy of all that talent and experience can bestow on it. His services were confined to no local scene. His fame is part of the common property of the nation. The appointment of Mr. Morris to the office of Superintendent of the Finances was the great era of his life, and we had almost said, the most fortunate incident of the revolutionary contest. But the commencement of his usefulness, and of his public services, may be dated at a period long anterior. At the time of the first indication of serious opposition to the British Government, his native city and State acknowledged him as one of the most fearless and active of her patriots. The splendid services which he subsequently rendered, in the administration of the Continental finances, threw all the incidents of his previous life into the shade; but there was a beautiful unity in his whole career, which his future and faithful biographer will not forget. With respect to his administration of the fiscal concerns of the Confederation, it would be inconsistent with the design of these remarks to make any detailed or even general observations. What Mr. Morris accomplished, tradition and history have informed us, and in the blessings of our national credit, we realize the results of the system which he and his successor designed. How he accomplished the projects which his genius suggested, and with what specific difficulties and disappointments he had to contend, the progress of

his financial plans from conception to maturity, amid circumstances of every variety of depression and gloom that clouded every mind, and prostrated every spirit but his own, the succession of hopes and fears which were never intermitted ;—these are points, which a personal memoir and the unreserved publication of his familiar and confidential correspondence can alone adequately illustrate. In the delineation of Mr. Morris's character and services, which we gather merely from the meagre and unsatisfactory memoirs which have been published, and from the details which have been preserved by his few surviving contemporaries, the strongest peculiarities are his unbounded personal influence, the fruit of a life of unblemished integrity, and the spirit of philosophic heroism with which he seems to have been actuated, and which in the course of his public life was most severely tried. Without his personal credit, the system he designed, successful as his inspiring genius made it, would have been nothing but an inoperative theory, and all the horrors of national bankruptcy and military despotism, the one rendered necessary by the other, must have ensued. It is said to have been the honorable distinction of the Spanish colonial merchants, that in commercial intercourse with them, the artificial securities of notes and guarantees were never resorted to, and that an entry in their own books, or a mere parole promise, using the word in its ordinary sense, constituted a safe and religious obligation. Confidence like this, which never was, and never will be habitual with us even in peaceful times, Mr. Morris was enabled to realize amidst the anarchy and convulsion of a civil war. If the army needed provision or ammunition, his promise of indemnity alone could procure a supply even from the most cautious; by his aid money could always be raised, and the name of Robert Morris on a note gave it a currency and credit, which neither the States nor the Confederation could command. His letters to different individuals in relation to the various exigencies of the Government are richly adorned with the moral beauty which this weight of character imparted. In one to General Schuyler, in the year 1781, on the occasion of a request to that officer to procure some supplies, he used the following characteristic language. 'I take it for granted, that you can upon your own credit and engagements raise this money; and for your reimbursement you may either take me as a public or a private man, for I pledge myself to repay you

with hard money wholly, if required, or part hard, part paper, if so you transact the business. *In short, I promise*, and you may rely that no consideration whatever shall induce me to make a promise that I am not able to perform.' That security was never known to fail. By the heroism to which we have alluded, we mean the perfect subordination of natural feeling to a stern sense of duty, which enabled him to withstand all the cavils of calumny and suspicion to which his official station exposed him, in the full reliance that the time would come, sooner or later, when all would acknowledge the propriety of his measures, and the purity of his motives. Mr. Morris passed through every variety of trial in this respect, without the slightest faltering of resolution, and on no occasion is it recorded of him, that for the purposes of temporary vindication he sacrificed a public benefit, however remote, or swerved from the line which his sense of official duty pointed out for him to follow. The judgment which his sagacity assured him was inevitable, has long since been pronounced. During his life, all the misrepresentations of his public character that had ever existed were dissipated, and every succeeding year, as it elicits some new memorial of his services, pays new and cordial honors to his memory. The closing hours of this illustrious man also were obscured by personal misfortune, and darkened by pecuniary difficulties induced by speculations, in which misplaced confidence and a sanguine temperament had led him to participate. But overwhelming as were those misfortunes, and dark as was the shade they cast upon his parting hours, their effect has, we have every reason to believe, been much misunderstood, or most unkindly misrepresented. The consciousness of unsullied honor and honest motives was a support that never failed him. The vigor of a mind like his, trained in the school of difficulty, and strengthened by continued probation in a public post of painful responsibility, was not subdued; and while he saw around him the wreck of hopes and expectations in which he had fondly indulged, he submitted to the blow with calm resignation, and found in the discharge of familiar and social duties enough to console and cheer the short remnant of his eventful life. Mr. Morris devoted the last years of his life to the selection and arrangement of his financial papers and letters, which remain a rich legacy to his posterity and his country.

There are other individuals connected with the history of

the Revolution in our sister State, to whose memory we regret our inability to pay the tribute, which is most justly due. The names of statesmen, such as Charles Thomson, James Wilson, and Thomas McKean ; of gallant soldiers like Wayne, and Mifflin, and Potter, and Irvine, and Armstrong, are worthy of a more elaborate notice than we now have it in our power to bestow.

We owe some apology to the respectable association, the title of whose transactions we have placed at the head of this article, for having used their volume merely for our own convenience, without a specific reference to its contents. As there is nothing, however, among the papers now published, with the exception of a single memoir, which relates to the subject to which our observations have been directed, we may be excused for the unceremonious manner with which we have treated them, and for one suggestion in parting. We regret to find, by a comparison of this with the preceding volumes of the society's transactions, that so small a share of their attention has been bestowed on the revolutionary annals of their State, and may be permitted to hope that they will be induced to give another and more profitable direction to their inquiries. Much may be done by them towards illustrating the subjects to which we have cursorily referred. Materials may be collected, records preserved, and the testimony of the few survivors of our age of honor and legitimate renown may be perpetuated. The colonial history of our country, with which alone the society seem to have employed themselves, is a subject of little interest, except so far as it throws light upon the circumstances attending our national birth, and one about which the public may be excused for being very indifferent. We would not exchange one document illustrative of the era of the Revolution and of the ancestry from whom we have inherited our youthful liberties, for all the records of charter history that now slumber in appropriate oblivion. They are as worthless in comparison as was the commentary on the Psalms, which for so many ages obscured the treatise *de Republicâ*. The unhonored sleep in which the revolutionary progenitors of our Pennsylvanian brethren repose, will, we trust, ere long be broken ; and if any thing that we have said shall have a tendency to produce that result, all the ends we have had in view will be attained.